

# 'Deal or No Deal model Patricia Kara is the real 'Deal'

Model Patricia Kara appears on 'Deal Or No Deal.'

Four years after its debut, "

## Deal or No Deal

" is the top-rated syndicated show on television, and celebrates its 200th episode on Monday.

## Patricia Kara

, the beauty behind briefcase No. 9, dishes on what life is like behind the scenes with 25 models and one exuberant host.

## Patricia Kara

Age: 36

Job Title: Briefcase No. 9 model

Time on the job: Four years

Hours per week: More than 50 hours over three days every two weeks for the prime-time show, and 40 hours over three days every two weeks for the syndicated show

**How did you become the face of briefcase No. 9?**

I thought I was auditioning for a co-hosting position, and when I got called back there were 10 times more girls. I was so confused, thinking: "Is this a models' reality show?"

I thought it would just be a few days of work, and it's turned into almost

four years, with different versions of the show in over 60 countries. It's even on in my hometown in Greece.

What's the difference between the original show and the new, syndicated version?

The new show is a faster, half-hour version of the prime-time show. The contestants hold the cases, so there's only two of us models, and there's a wheel involved. I spin the wheel.

**Is the job as glamorous as it looks?**

It's not. People think we stand there for an hour and we're done, but our longest days are about 19 hours and our shortest days probably 13. By the time you've gone through hair and makeup and you're in your dress, you can't sit down because you can't wrinkle it.

**What do you do to pass the time?**

We play games backstage, and hum tunes to different shows.

It's kind of hard not to eat too much. We get healthy stuff, but there's also pizzas and burgers and hot dogs backstage. In the first three days of filming I gained 10 pounds, so now I try to walk away from the food table.

**So you're a bit of a foodie?**

I lived in New York for about three years, and the one thing I always search for when I'm back is zeppoles, a kind of



deep-fried dough and ricotta dessert. Every September when the San Gennaro festival is on, I find them. Otherwise, I walk the city looking for them.

With all those long hours of filming, should we be on the lookout for a reel of hilarious outtakes?

We've had a few girls fall! I at one point was dancing onstage between

commercials, and I swung around and hit the briefcase and knocked it over and hit the girl in front and knocked her over and the case opened. When the case opens you have to start the game all over again, which takes a good 45 minutes.

**Do you hang out with many of the other girls?**

We invite each other to a lot of different things. We've been to each other's weddings and birthdays, and we e-mail each other about castings and salons.

**What's Howie like off camera?**

Howie is constantly on. I don't know how he does it. He's very observant, very aware and very attentive. He'll remember a conversation you had a year ago and your family members' names.

**Have any of the contestants been brave enough to ask you out?**

Quite a few have asked different girls out, but most of the girls have husbands or boyfriends. Recently, a kid who must have been about 16 years old puts his hand up by his ear, like a phone, and says "Call me." I busted out in giggles backstage, where he couldn't see me. I felt like a cougar.

*Courtesy of NBC Universal*

## My hols: Simon Kassianides

The actor got his Bond-villain experience in the beach bars of Nha Trang and Mykonos

Simon Kassianides, 28, was a champion kick boxer before his acting career took over. He has appeared in many television dramas, including *The Fixer*, *The Passion*, *Spooks*, *Love Soup* and *Ultimate Force*.

His film debut was in *The Edge of Love* with Keira Knightley and Sienna Miller, and he is currently up against James Bond in the new movie *Quantum of Solace*. He lives in London

My parents are Greek; they moved to England before I was born, but my grandparents and uncles all still live in Greece. My dad is from Antiparos and my mum is Cypriot, so we spent a lot of time going back and visiting relatives when I was young. But in my last summer of university, when I was 22, I decided I wanted to reconnect with Greece on my own.

I went to Mykonos, because I'd heard good things about it, and arrived on a boat from Athens at dusk, just as the lights were coming on in the harbour and delicious smells were wafting out of the restaurants. It was magical. I got a job in a local bar, which beat pouring pints in the *Pitcher & Piano* in Wandsworth, and that summer was like an American coming-of-age movie. I fell in love with a girl from Athens who was quite well-known, very sought-after and being badly mistreated by her boyfriend.

I rescued her — and I paid the price. There were rivalries and street fights, and passions running high. It was a life-changing time. When I first arrived on the island, I thought I knew it all, but by the time I left at the end of the summer, I realised that I knew nothing.

I still go to Greece a lot and have just come back from a wedding. It was an intimate affair, in a beautiful white-domed church, but Greek weddings can



be epic: when my parents got married, it was a four-day event with 2,000 guests.

When I was 18, I travelled through Southeast Asia and I had a scary experience in Vietnam. I was in a beach bar in Nha Trang and there was a group of western guys next to us being loud, obnoxious and insensitive to the locals. One of the regulars had had enough and he must have thought that I was in the same group as the loud blokes — one minute I was sipping a strawberry daiquiri, the next I was lying on the floor covered in blood, with a fractured rib, a broken nose and a cut on the back of my calf muscle. All good practice for a Bond villain, I guess.

My mate had to call a cab to get me to the hospital, and the next day he heard that the police wanted to speak to me. We didn't want to get involved, so we decided to escape. As the police looked for us at the hotel, I discharged myself from the hospital. We paid a guy to take us to the station, then we got the overnight train to Ho Chi Minh City. It was such a relief to be out of there.

On the same trip, we did some trekking in northern

Thailand. Our guide was very good and he took us right off the beaten track. One evening, we arrived at a remote village where we got a warm welcome from the chief elder. We settled in and everything was great — apart from a wild dog that was tied up at the edge of the village. It barked and howled all night and we couldn't sleep a wink. So we got up and talked to someone about it, and soon we heard the barking getting softer as the dog was moved away. The next morning, they handed me a bowl of rice and meat for my breakfast — the guide said it was special wild boar. It was very sinewy and when I mentioned that it wasn't how I'd imagined wild boar would taste, he admitted that actually it was the dog — slaughtered in our honour. I couldn't eat any more after that, so I called in my mate and said, "Come and have some wild boar for breakfast . . ."

A few years ago, I got myself into a spot of bother on a last-minute package holiday in Rhodes with my Italian girlfriend. I didn't want to have to speak to anyone, so I decided to pretend I was Italian too. When we arrived in Rhodes, there was a coach waiting to take 50 or so of us English tourists to our resort. Whenever someone spoke to me, I just said "Scusi, non parlo inglese" a lot. What I didn't realise was that our room would be on a courtyard, surrounded by the people from the coach, and that we couldn't avoid them. Plus, one of the English girls was desperate to practise her Italian on me. My girlfriend thought I was an idiot; she didn't bail me out at all. Luckily, I managed to keep up the disguise for a whole week — but it wasn't quite the relaxing holiday I'd expected.

*Simon Kassianides talked to Harriet Perry*